THE BLUE TRIANGLE ON BABEL'S TOWER

Lucia pulled her shawl farther across her face and shrank down on the station platform bench as the solid blue figure suddenly bent down over her. Excitedly she shook her head in answer to the question that she could not understand. She searched through her red plaid waist for the paper that Tony had folded into a little square and given to her. The writing on it, in the English that Tony knew and she did not, told the house where she lived. Tony had explained it all to her that morning. He had told it to her again at the station. Then, waving his hat he had disappeared into the train with the rest of the men, and Lucia had been left standing outside the gate. There were crowds of women pushing all about her. They were weeping. So Lucia wept, too.

Lucia had been betrothed to Tony in the old country. Five years before, with a long ticket for New York pinned into his inside pocket, her lover had left her. He wrote in every letter that he had made her a home in the new country. Her dowry money had finally provided her own transportation, and for two months Tony and she had been married. Then he had drawn a ticket with a number on it, and this morning he had gone off to war.

To the policeman Lucia told all these things in rapid Italian. But the policeman only talked back to her as rapidly in a language that was not Italian. She followed him dumbly to headquarters. An hour later a woman wearing American clothes gently began talking to her in beautiful Italian.

Italian Lucia was only one of thousands of foreign-born women, Syrians, Italians, Armenians, Russians, Lithuanians, Polish, who, when the draft called their men folk to the American colors, asked in helpless confusion what it was all about. When would their men be back? What did people mean when they told them they would receive money through the mail? Where could they find work that they knew how to do? Was there no one who could explain it all to them in their own language?

The Y. W. C. A. was ready to offer assistance, but it would be of no value to offer it in English. Consequently it had to supply a corps of women who could talk to the foreign-born woman at her own door in the language that she was used to hearing in the homeland. To teach her English was as essential a factor in her Americanization as to find her a job. Therefore the war council of the Y. W. C. A. set out to find her English.

A year before the war began in Europe, the leaders of the Young Woman's Christian association foresaw just such a situation, and made ready to meet it. They studied the needs of the immigrant. They trained skilled American social workers to become familiar with the home habits and to speak the language of the Lett and the Hungarian and the Greek and the other foreign mothers who brought babies and bundles over from Ellis island to Battery park.

The organization into which this experiment has developed was named by the Y. W. C. A. national board, "The International Institute for Young Women." In terms which these women can understand, it is teaching the foreign-born how to sew and cook and care for the baby.

To girls like Italian Lucia, who confusedly lingered on the station platforms when the draft trains pulled out, the W. Y. C. A. is giving direct assistance. Educated European women, appointed to the regular staff of workers at the camp Y. W. C. A. Hostess Houses are able to talk to the drafted men in their own language, assist them in writing letters home, and in arranging furloughs and little visits to the camp.

"The Home Information Service for Foreign Families of Enlisted Men" is doing practical relief work for the wives and mothers. The purpose of the board is to help the women folk left behind to understand where their boys are and how they are being treated; how they need home support and cheer, how to send them comforts, and to keep pace themselves by learning English and other things, so that when the boys come home they will not find their women still very un-American and out of sympathy with them.

Food conservation bulletins have been translated into 18 or 19 languages. At the factories and munition plants interpreters are available for the non-English speaking women by whom the real war industries of the country are being largely carried on. In 25 important cities International Institute Bureaus are training American and foreign women for full time social service work with foreigners. Twenty-four trained women are employed on the national and district field staff of the Y. W. C. A. On June 15 there were 105 trained women working at Americanization.

When more than 75,000 Chicago men filled out their blue cards for the September 12 draft, Gang Luo Wong appeared at one precinct bringing with him Mrs. Gang Wong and the three children. All five wished to register. The enrolling clerk explained, but the Gang Luo Wongs make many broken Chinese remonstrances before the master of the family was induced to sign a card without his wife. Mrs. Wong could not speak English. What would his family do in a strange country if Gang Luo went to war? All over the United States Chinese and Poles and Serbs were asking the same question. It is to just such needs that the War Council of the Y. M. C. A. is organized to give assistance.

A WALLED CITY OF WOMEN

A little sunny village has grown up inside a high wall in France within the last year. Its square flat houses stand in straight even rows and along one side of the city wall is a long dormitory for single women. There are many more of them than of the families in the drab little houses. The village is full of women—old, young, middle-aged—whose faces, hands and hair slowly are turning yellow from the powder which it is said will eventually affect their lungs. But most of them are refugees and the fact that they are giving up their good looks, their health, and perhaps their lives in the munition factory, is of little moment to them. They have come into the walled town from ruined villages and devastated farms with their frightened little children, their despairing old people, carrying all their earthly possessions in tiny bundles. In their individual lives there is no future; in all their world there is no interest but the conquest of the Hun.

No one comes into this little war community that centers around the big new munitions plant but those who work. Because of the danger and the blighting yellow powder, the work is highly paid and all the workers are volunteers.

The women wear overalls or apron dresses, some of black sateen, some nondescript. The dull garb harmonizes with the yellowing faces and despairing eyes.

Into this modern walled city of despair the Blue Triangle has flashed the first message of hope. The Y. W. C. A. foyer is the only recreational center within reach. The cars which find cafes at the end of the line a mile away, stop running at seven o'clock to save fuel. The city is three miles from the factory.

"My problem," writes the Y. W. C. A. secretary in charge, "is to keep the women occupied in the evenings, to give them good healthy amusement so that they will forget their sorrows and go to bed and sleep, physically tired out from playing."

She goes on to tell of some of the women and girls who come to the foyer:

"There is a pretty little round, rosy-cheeked girl here who is just beginning to show the effects of the powder. The roots of her hair and her forehead are a pale yellow. The palms of her hands are a deep burnt orange and her hands and arms a bright yellow.

"There is an ex-professional dancer, an interesting girl who enjoys the foyer and helps entertain the other girls. There is a professional pianist who does her bit at the noon and evening hours. There is one rough-and-ready girl who speaks English, whose father was an innkeeper in northern France. There is a pretty little girl who is engaged to a French soldier who still is rejoicing over the five minutes she had with him recently during an air raid. His mother is the caretaker here and he is one of six sons in the war. Two of them are German military prisoners, two are civil prisoners in Germany and two are soldiers in the trenches. Her home in the north of France was destroyed and she escaped with a small bundle of such things as she could carry in her hands.

"There is a sweet-faced girl who was a lacemaker in Valenciennes, who came direct to us from the German-ridden section after a hard experience in getting away."

These are the women the Blue Triangle is helping to forget—perhaps only for an hour at a time—the horrors that have blackened their hearthstones and darkened the world.

"My foyer," the secretary writes, "consists of a hall and two large rooms with cement floors. One has a writing table and paper, pens and ink, sewing machines, a cupboard with teacups in it, a large table with papers and magazines, easy chairs and my desk. The other room has a piano, more tables, chairs, ironing boards and a Victrola. There are unframed French pictures and American and French war posters around the room. The walls are painted gray and white."

Saturday evenings they sing and dance. "First they have a chorus," writes the secretary, "such as 'Le Reve Passe' or the 'Hymne des Aviateurs' or something equally thrilling, and at the final notes of triumph a voice at my ears begs, 'Un polka, mees.' The polka finished, there is a call for the 'Hymne Americain' and we sing the 'Star-Spangled Banner,' (Le Drapeau Etoile) in two languages."

These foyers have been established in several munition centers in France. Each one has a cafeteria, a recreation hall and rooms fitted up as rest rooms, writing and sewing rooms. At night these rooms are filled with French girls learning English, bookkeeping or stenography, that they may work in the offices of the American Expeditionary Forces. In connection with each is a large recreation field or park.

At the request of the French ministry of war the Young Women's Christian association has opened clubrooms for the sixteen thousand French women employed in the offices of the war department.

So successful has been the foyer work in France that a call has come from England to the American Y. W. C. A. to bring its Blue Triangle huts and foyers across the channel. The English Y. W. C. A. has established centers for munitions workers on a smaller scale, but after inspection of the American work in France the four English representatives to the Allies' Women's congress in Paris in August, officially requested that the American Y. W. C. A. undertake similar work in England.

THE BLUE TRIANGLE AT RUSSIA'S FRONT

The Blue Triangle clubrooms in Petrograd were in half shadow. A few scattered candles flung gleams as persistent and as vague as Russia's hope of liberty. A hundred Russian girls and six young men were guests of the first Young Women's Christian association in all Russia. It was a gala afternoon tea but it was dark because the winter days end at three o'clock and there is a restriction on the use of candles and kerosene as well as of electricity.

The girls were making merry even in the gloom of winter, the twilight and the tragedy of war. One slender white-faced girl with purple-shadowed eyes was merrier than all the rest. Her wit and ringing laugh were contagious.

"Sonya is wonderful tonight," one girl whispered to another as she stirred gently into her tea the one lump of sugar doled out carefully for the party. The Y. W. C. A. secretaries had been saving the sugar for months—putting aside at each meal one of the two lumps served with the coffee in the restaurant, that there might be a bit of sweet for this first party. There was no bread.

"Sonya is not drinking her tea," her pale little admirer went on, "yet she fainted this morning at the factory and the forewoman said she was hungry."

"We're all hungry," was the monotonous reply. "It wasn't that."

Something stopped the laughter and talk suddenly but the hush that fell in the dimly lit room was as joyous as the gaiety. One of Russia's greatest singers stood by the piano and lifted up her glorious voice filled with the tears and heartbreak that people at peace call thrills.

They went away early when the music was done—these sad-eyed, half-starved little guests of the Blue Triangle—for danger lurks in the dark of Petrograd streets, robberies and murders—sharp little by-products of a nation's chaos and a world at war.

Sonya lingered after the others were gone. She was standing close by the secretary-hostess' chair when she turned from saying good-night to the last one of the other girls. The laughter had died out of the girl's eyes and the gaiety from her voice.

"Will you give me a note to the factory superintendent," she asked, "telling him I'm attending classes here at night?" She spoke in French, for she knew no English, and the secretary, no Russian.

"Yes, if it will help you." The secretary was glad to give her such a note but she was curious. "Tell me why."

"If he knows the girls are going to night classes he won't put us on the night shift. He will let us work days so we can come. Yesterday I asked for the night shift. Today I have changed my mind."

The secretary wondered. Sonya had not been in any of the classes. Had the bright little party given her an interest in the work of the association? Had the friendliness of the American secretaries reached her? Was it the music that had given her an impetus to study toward something beyond a factory?

"What is it that interests you?" the secretary asked her. "You are not in any of the classes now, are you? What is it you want to take up?"

"This morning I looked out the factory window," and Sonya's voice reminded the secretary of the call of a night bird before a storm. "Down in the courtyard was a crowd and three men were killed. Killed by the police—the bolshevik police, while I stood there and watched. They said they were anarchists. One was my brother. Another was my sweetheart. I came here tonight to forget. But I cannot forget. Always I will remember. I want nothing now but to carry on their work, and to do that I must study and learn—I must learn English and many other things. I want to go in all the classes. If the foreman at the factory knows I do that, he will help. He will let me work days."

In the dark, the hunger, the cold, and the terror of Petrograd, the Blue Triangle is sending out its shining invitation to the bewildered women and young girls of Russia. It is offering a little oasis in the midst of the chaos where they may come and rest and relax, play games, listen to music, study English, French, stenography, bookkeeping, or music, and as one tired girl expressed it, forget for the moment that they are in Petrograd. Most of the girls who gather at the sign of the Blue Triangle are bookkeepers and stenographers, but scattered among them are factory girls, domestics, and girls who never have worked.

"In Petrograd and elsewhere in Russia," says Miss Clarissa Spencer, world secretary of the Y. W. C. A. who started the work in Russia, "girls formerly employed in government offices come to us who have struck against the bolshevists. They're out of jobs. They're hungry. One girl told me she couldn't take gymnasium work. It gave her such an appetite. But they refuse to return to work for the bolshevists."

Miss Helen Ogden, one of the Y. W. C. A. secretaries who was forced to leave Petrograd on account of the German advance, writes home that: "It's like living on the screen of a melodrama to be in Russia. Bullets and shooting are almost as familiar street sounds here as the clang of the street car and the honk of the automobile at home. Here we learn to live and work under frequent shooting and street battles and to flee only when we are told by the authorities that we must."

THE RIVALS

By AGNES G. LEROGAN.

It seemed to David that he had always loved Shirley Dare. And Shirley, realizing that evident fact from the time of her schooldays, had been an imperious and capricious sweetheart.

Not that the girl deceived David by pretending affection returned. She had merely accepted his devotion as one bestowing favor.

The country town had been unusually quiet that summer. David's presence on the shadowy porch was welcomed, as loneliness welcomes companionship. Most of Fairlands' young men had gone to war, while young women of Shirley's acquaintance sought diversion in vacations elsewhere.

"If you would not be so agreeable and kind," she told him complexly, "I believe I might care for you—really."

David smiled; to be either disagreeable or unkind to Shirley would be an impossibility. So he decided to sacrifice a few of these idyllic days in absenting himself from her presence, in the hope that "absence might make Shirley's heart fonder."

When separation became unbearable, and he began the homeward trip, it was in a strange spirit of apprehension. Anxiously his eyes gazed ahead to the little porch; then he understood.

Shirley was there in her white frock, and beside her a tall young man. "Where had the fellow come from?" David savagely wondered, as he walked up the path, and all at once his newly bought suit seemed common and his own bulk clumsy in comparison with the stranger's faultlessly clad figure.

"Why, how do you do?" said Shirley. There was new formality in the extension of her hand.

"Very well," answered David, and relapsed into silence. Shirley introduced the men.

"Mr. Webster is an attorney here on business," she smilingly explained. "He has been finding Fairlands dull; we must try to remove that impression."

Shirley had been doing her prettiest, David mentally decided, to remove the impression. She and the joyous attorney appeared to be on the friendliest terms.

As weeks slipped by and the three were much together, hope and fear struggled perplexedly in David's heart. There were moments—breathless moments—when Shirley's eyes seemed to seek his with a new tender question. Again, she would turn, vaguely troubled, to that other manly, admiring face. She was weighing herself, David knew, trying to find the answer to the problem of her heart. He decided to go back to the city, to search the record of this stranger, who had come with triumphant self-confidence among them. And the man proved to be all that he had represented, and more. For John Webster had laid no claim to the wealth that was his, or to the enviable name of his family. So there in the city David fought a great fight, and the unselfish love of his lifetime triumphed. If Shirley were even now hesitating between the two men in her heart, he, David would go away forever.

When he returned again to Fairlands a new light shone in his eyes, and Shirley could not know that it was the light of renunciation. John Webster's ready smile had disappeared—the atmosphere of the little porch that evening seemed fraught with a vital element.

Quietly the three sat talking until the hour grew late. Then very wearily David arose. There were new lines about his mouth, and his face was white.

"Good-night," he said slowly, "and it may be good-by. I have been examined in the city and they find me in A 1 condition to fight, so—I have enlisted for the war. We leave for camp in a few days—then over the water."

His two listeners were silent—David laughed softly. "Nothing heroic about it, you understand," he added; "bound to be called later, just anticipated the thing."

"Oh! David," Shirley murmured. "I can't think of you going off like that."

She put her hand to her throat distressed, then quickly turned as though seeking comfort from the other man. John Webster drew a deep breath, then put forth a steady hand.

"Good-night, little Shirley Dare," he said. "With me, also, it may mean good-by. A business trip carries me to California tomorrow. My stay there will undoubtedly be prolonged. I thank you for the kindness of your hospitality."

As he paused, the girl stood looking up at him, hurt incredulity on her features.

"Good-by," John Webster repeated.

Down the broad road the rivals walked together. "You love her," David burst out; "why—then, do you go away?"

The lawyer turned and smiled into David's wan face. "There is," he remarked, "a law of compensation. Can you tell me why you should give up all that you have, for my sake? You may fight in my place, because a few years bar me from service. But the woman you love—she shall be free to dream dreams of her hero. When you return, she will be here eagerly waiting."

David caught John Webster's hand in a mighty grasp, then wheeling about he made his way back down the road.

RESOLUTIONS OF RESPECT.

The Martin County Chapter of A. R. C. suffered the loss of its first member in the death of Ewart Williamson.

Ewart's death was due to an accident that occurred at Sprigg W. Va., where he was employed.

He was a bright, generous, lovable young man and would have reached his majority had he lived until May 3, 1919.

Ewart was the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Williamson, of Stedham, Ky., and is mourned by his parents, brothers, sisters and many friends.

We, the officers and members of the Red Cross of Martin county Chapter do hereby extend to the bereavd family our loving and heartfelt sympathy, and we do commend them to the great heart of our Heavenly Father who loves and cares for all.

W. M. HALE, Chairman.